

Child sexual exploitation refers to the sexual abuse of a person below the age of 18, as well as to the production of images of such abuse and the sharing of those images online.

Online child sexual exploitation is a constantly evolving phenomenon and is shaped by developments in technology. Mobile connectivity, growing internet coverage in developing countries and the development of pay-as-you-go streaming solutions, which provide a high degree of anonymity to the viewer, are furthering the trend in the commercial live-streaming of child sexual abuse.

As a form of cybercrime, child sexual exploitation is one of the EU's priorities in the fight against serious and organised crime as part of [EMPACT 2022 - 2025](#).

Europol has [identified key threats](#) in the area of child sexual exploitation:

- ▶ Peer-to-peer (P2P) networks and anonymised access like Darknet networks (e.g. Tor). These computer environments remain the main platform to access child abuse material and the principal means for non-commercial distribution. These are invariably attractive for offenders and easy to use. The greater level of anonymity and the strong networking possibilities offered by hidden internet that exists beneath the "surface web" appear to make criminals more comfortable in offending and discussing their sexual interests.
- ▶ Live-streaming of child sexual abuse. Facilitated by new technology, one trend concerns the profit-driven abuse of children overseas, live in front of a camera at the request of westerners.

To a lesser degree, there is also some evidence that forms of commercial child sexual exploitation such as on-demand live streaming of abuse is also contributing to the rise of the amount of CSEM online.

Live distant child abuse has the most obvious links with commercial distribution of CSEM. As new and/or unseen CSEM is valuable currency within the offending community, live distant abuse is therefore a way to not only acquire more CSEM, but to simultaneously generate material with a high 'value'.

- ▶ Online solicitation and sexual extortion. The growing number of children and teenagers who own smartphones has been accompanied by the production of self-generated indecent material. Such material, initially shared with innocent intent, often finds its way to "collectors", who often proceed to exploit the victim, in particular by means of extortion.
- ▶ Networking and forensic awareness of offenders. Offenders learn from the mistakes of those that have been apprehended by law enforcement.

## ASSISTANCE AND EXPERTISE

Europol's [European Cybercrime Centre \(EC3\)](#) supports the competent authorities in Member States in preventing and detecting all forms of criminality associated with the sexual exploitation of children.

It provides assistance and expertise in combatting the distribution of child abuse material through all kinds of online environments, and tackles all forms of criminal online behaviour against children, such as grooming, self-generated indecent material, sexual extortion and live-streaming on the web.

Fighting the distribution of child abuse material includes preventing and intercepting it, and stopping it from being shared through peer-to-peer networks, as well as through commercial platforms. In this regard, EC3 is involved in the [European Financial Coalition against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Online \(EFC\)](#), a network funded by the European Commission composed of law enforcement, NGOs and public and private sector stakeholders.

EC3 is also involved in the [Virtual Global Taskforce \(VGT\)](#), a collaborative partnership of law enforcement agencies, who have come together across the digital divide to combat online child sexual abuse worldwide. The [Report Abuse button](#) on the VGT website is an effective way to report suspicious online behaviour.

Cooperation at an international level has proven to be very effective in identifying victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation. In 2015 Europol hosted a [Victim Identification Taskforce](#), which resulted in 240 new collections of material being uploaded to Interpol's child sexual exploitation image database and the extension of the existing 100 collections.

In addition, Europol's Project HAVEN (Halting Europeans Abusing Victims in Every Nation) supports EU Member States in detecting and intercepting child sexual offenders travelling abroad to abuse children.

NUMBER OF ITEMS FOUND: 164

SEARCH



TYPE

Article/Story, Event, How-To Guide, Landing Page, Multimedia, News/Press Release, Operation, Page, Publication/Document



TARGET GROUP



07  
Jun  
2019

## EUROPOL AND FRONTEX SIGN NEW JOINT ACTION PLAN

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

27  
May  
2019

## GLOBAL TASKFORCE CLOSE TO IDENTIFYING THREE VICTIMS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

29  
Mar  
2019

## ITALY ORGANISES FIRST NATIONAL VICTIM IDENTIFICATION TASKFORCE

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

08  
Feb  
2019

## VIRTUAL GLOBAL TASKFORCE MEETS IN AUSTRALIA TO DISCUSS ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

23  
Nov  
2018

## MAKING THE VOICES OF YOUTH ADVOCATES HEARD AT EUROPOL'S 1ST EUROPEAN YOUTH DAY

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

26  
Oct  
2018

## 241 VICTIMS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE SAFEGUARDED THANKS TO GLOBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS



## INTERPOL-EUROPOL CONFERENCE CALLS FOR GLOBAL RESPONSE TO CYBERCRIME

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE



## OVER 2 MILLION PIECES OF CHILD ABUSE MATERIAL SEIZED IN SPAIN

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE



## WITH YOUR HELP WE ARE 21 000 STEPS CLOSER TO SAVING A CHILD FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE



## EIGHT ARRESTED FOR DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MATERIAL THROUGH SKYPE AND THE DARKNET

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE



## YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED 70 OBJECTS TAKEN FROM CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMAGES

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE



## EUROPOL REVIEW 2016 - 2017

PUBLICATION/DOCUMENT

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